



# Space Civilization: A Study on the Consciousness of Intelligent Life in Mars Trilogy

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**Abstract**— Science fiction often renders plausible directions in developing the society and making it more rigid towards any outer species that is a threat to human civilization as seen in sci-fi web series *Halo*, however, establishing space civilization requires the process of terraforming that consists of several behaviors like the culture, social, science and their ethical implications. This research paper intends to analyze the multiple aspects of terraforming that includes the consciousness of the intelligent life and what it meant to be the intelligent species in the universe. This paper includes a comparison of *Halo* and *Mars Trilogy* to delve deep into the aspects of narrating the consciousness of the universe which is none other than the humans. While approaching the intelligence of the universe, anthropocentric attitude was kept aside because in doing so the study can be conducted fairly in understanding the establishment of a race that is emotional and rational in behavior.

**Keywords**— intelligent life, consciousness, terraforming, transnational, space civilization

## I. INTRODUCTION

Space civilization, as the term suggest can only be established when people initiates spreading human colony from Earth to other planets of the solar system like the most suitable one is Mars, but the establishment of such civilization also requires technological intervention along with skilled personnel. Mars has been speculated by many science fiction writers in their stories since scientific discoveries has made public the geographical structure, atmosphere and land of the red planet as a place that can be habitable to human beings or may be other species like H.G. Wells *War of the World*. In order to establish a civilization on other planets scientific intervention of advanced level is required which is termed as terraforming; a process of converting a hostile planet into habitable one. The soil, air, atmosphere and environment requires modification as well to support humans life and other living beings on new planet like Mars along with the risk that this process carries must be suffered because everything has its side effect. The side effect of terraforming is however very minimal with respect to the

planet or abiotic life but very high with respect to plants, animals and even humans because the later are subject to biological experiment like the gerontological surgery in *Mars Trilogy* for fixing the DNA to increase life and the implantation of cube in humans in the novel *2312* and sci-fi web series *Halo*.

It is a question of great concern that why people want to shift or transform other planet when our home planet is itself in extreme danger of global warming and population explosion. But, it is for sure that those settling in space would follow a culture and form a government different from the earth like 'the formation of a constitution that every Terran culture could agree to!' (Blue Mars 135). Similar prototype of government formation for space civilization can be seen in *Green Mars* wherein 'Mars was considered as a world rather than a nation that is composed of different cultures and religions along with democratization of science, education and growth of sustainable economy' (444-445). If Arkady is to be believed then terraforming Mars is going to bring not only geophysical change but also changes the politics,

economic, science etc. therefore, his ideology and many such Bogdanovist, who were his followers and extreme Reds, wanted to free entire Martian population from the transnational with a vision of establishing egalitarian government and to '*kick all the earthly powers from Mars*' (Blue Mars 04).

On the language part Robinson's science fiction established a society on Mars with different ethnic groups, culture, religions and more migrants from the earth with different languages, culture and nation like, India, China, Bangladesh, Switzerland etc. but still English as a language seems dominating in space, it was the mass language of the spacers. Robinson illustrates the major reason for terraforming other planet is the lack of resources on earth and overpopulation along with increasing water level due to global warming.

Robinson's space civilization was exploded with humans from the earth but along with terraforming Mars they terraformed themselves as well and became even superior to earth's humans, who were even deprived of the longevity treatment, however, the condition of people on earth and Mars was similar because they both suffered; people from earth suffered overpopulation, pollution, lack of resources that lead to internal political unrest and conflict among the socio-cultural groups but the later also suffered, rather in more critical terms than the people of earth, because they were directly open to extreme radiation, UV charges, no atmosphere to breathe and grow plants, no water to drink and the only hope they had is the material support from the transnational. In this sense Mars reflects the same human problems in different time and space; the history of colonization repeated and along with technological support primitivism was adopted in Robinson's Mars Trilogy.

The problems of earth however, seems increasing with the political unrest due to the demands of longevity treatment for all, and such unrest from the earth had direct effects on terraforming Mars. But, the author succeeded in establishing a civilization of super humans who achieved longevity with biological engineering; a culture that later developed and became very common for the people of Mars and eventually spacers. In this sense the humans in Mars Trilogy are very intelligent species in the universe because and as Robinson said that '*we are the consciousness of the universe*' (Red Mars 186) therefore, restricting to one planet might lead to destruction of such species in an instance, therefore, space colonization is very ethical and a source of spreading humans (rather better form of humans). Space civilization renders the consciousness of humans and the way they shape their surrounding and the universe for which terraforming is an essential tool. Terraforming, thus, becomes beneficial for

both transnational and the society through which envisioning future would be possible, however, establishing a colony in space would satiate the scarce resources on earth and overcome the problems of population explosion as Robinson discussed in *Blue Mars*.

## II. OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this paper is to present the space civilization that is formed by the consciousness of the intelligent species in the universe who are none other than the humans. The study focuses to prove that why and in what terms humans are the consciousness or the intelligent species in the universe indulge in populating the space excluding any other species, if any, in the universe as much superior as the humans.

## III. SPACE AND CONSCIOUSNESS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE IN SCI-FI FILMS: A GLIMPSE

Today, Hollywood is mostly concerned with the formulation of sci-fi films which appeal to several audiences thus, bringing enormous profit. But, Hollywood is not alone in this endeavour and many others like, the Korean, Chinese etc. film making agencies have also acclaimed fame and enormous gain by rendering sci-fi plots in their stories. Science fiction films are so appealing to the audience because they incorporate better actions, plot, better graphics and a futuristic envision of human society with possible threats and the process to fix it. Most often such films are the adaptation of sci-fi novels like, Wells *War of the World* or Clarke's *2001: Space Odyssey*. SF films like *Interstellar* (2014), *Time Machine* (2002), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) etc. include hard science fiction theories but films like *Avengers* (2012), *Star Wars* (1977), *Iron Man* (2008) etc. blend science and technology with the power of cosmos, for instance, in the *Avengers Infinity War* (2018) one can easily notice the interaction of technological objects with the power of the cosmos—"infinity stones" that are capable of controlling anything like, soul, mind, reality, power, time and space. Hard science fiction movies like *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *War of the Worlds* (2005), *The Martians* (2015) etc. create characters that are universal and presents interstellar space as dark mystery capable of transforming the future and past, altering the dimensions like in *Interstellar*, the space and space travelling has been very terrific when the ship enters the black hole and reached next dimension of time and space. Another example is *Ant-man and the Wasp* (2018), which uses the concept of "Quantum theory" and its next series *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania* (2023) presented a quantum world below the earth with

different species. *The Martians* (2015) is another such film in which the life on Mars and the threats of the dark space has been unveiled that also inspired NASA for the scientific inventions and the ecopoiesis of Mars. However, space civilisation can be seen in *Avengers* series, and then such civilisation has been presented in the sci-fi web series *Halo* (2022) with more futuristic shape, size and function of the machines that often mixes the real with fictional in such aspect that consciously dividing what is real and what is fictional becomes improbable; such inability of consciousness to distinguish between real and the fictional is termed as “hyperreality” (Baudrillard 1981) which is the age we are living in because we are surrounded by machines and technological objects that diminishes the fine line between the fictional and the real for instance, the virtual reality and the video games that presents a copy of human society without the original—‘simulacra’.

In anime like *Dragon Ball Resurrection ‘F’* (Tadayoshi Yamamuro, Japan, 2015) and the daily episodes of *Dragon Ball Super* the consciousness of the intelligent life is presented through Saiyans like, Goku and Vegeta who surpasses their limit time and again during combat. The capsule corporation in the anime run by beautiful scientist Bulma is the birthplace of many scientific technologies in *Dragon Ball* like AI and spaceships, time travelling machine, dragon ball finder etc. the people of earth and protecting their sole consciousness from the evil becomes the responsibility of Saiyans, a species from different planet, that renders human like creatures and emotions but with super natural powers that they used against the evil like, “Cell”, biologically modified evil and then Frieza, a creature with lizard body and human face from another planet, Magin Buu etc. to save earth and humanity. The anime kept humanity and the position of earth as superior to other universes in the solar system and presented Goku as the strongest character in the entire universe capable of protecting their loved ones and the people on earth, thus, depicted the true consciousness of intelligent life that must thrive in the universe no matter what the circumstances may be. *Dragon Ball super* is an animated series wherein we see the Japanese culture along with the interpolation of time and space in reality.

The transformation of Captain America from skinny boy to a muscled man using a closed box shell is yet another prominent example of imagined advanced technology in the films and an example of intelligence possessed by humans. Captain America or the Hulk transformation is not natural but artificial, a perfect example of how advanced science and technology can build super-humans with the help of genetic mutation like, the “gerontological” surgery as projected in the Mars

Trilogy and the implantation of AI in Swan in the novel 2312 and in John in *Halo* (United States, 2022).

*Halo* (2022) a sci-fi web series that projected the life of humans in space and detailed about the space colonisation to defeat even more intelligent life than humans—“Covenants” or aliens. The fight between the humans and the Covenants renders the fight of survival for the fittest and the most intelligent race in the universe. Ethically establishing humans as the most intelligent species in the universe seems very urging in these sci-fi web series and anime like *Dragon Ball Super* but *Halo* breaks such conventions and presents a fight for empire building in the universe; a power than can control galactic movements.

*Wall-E* (2008), an animated movie that shows the scene of devastated Earth and Wall-E a trash compacting robot was left upon to trace the signs of life on Earth, meanwhile Eve an egg shaped robot was sent to Earth to retrieve the seed searched by Wall-E and scan for life. The movie shows the greed of mega-national BnL leading to rampage on Earth and eventually evacuating humanity in space on the spaceship named *Axiom*, the ship was programmed for hyper jump when the seed (a sign of life) will be placed in ‘*Holo Detector*’ so that humans can recolonize Earth. Meanwhile, the laziness and microgravity has made humans mere servant of the machines, as a result humans are incapable of performing any task, they became fat and unable to walk. Another such example is the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*, where “Hal” an AI controls the spaceship and kills astronaut in order to solemnly build its supremacy over humans. The space civilization in this film was inside the big spaceship *Axiom* travelling through infinite space like Robinson’s novel *Aurora* (2015) wherein the population is shown inside a ship that carries entire human biosphere in search of terraforming. However, the space and its colonization have never been untouched by the political affairs and the transnational interventions like BnL that can be seen in almost all the sci-fi movies.

#### IV. MARS TRILOGY AND THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF INTELLIGENT BEINGS

The gerontological surgery enhanced the long life of humans by fixing some errors in the DNA, thus, boosting them with stamina like a 10-year-old child is a revolutionary step in Robinson’s trilogy and a milestone to achieve for the existing medical science experts. Aditya Raj and Dr. Stuti Prasad’s research paper- ‘*Science in Robinson’s Science Fiction: A Study of Mars Trilogy*’ presented the calorie restriction method to achieve the

longevity in reality; the experiment was carried out on rats and its success rate was 33 per cent (6). In fact, a hundred years was the least expected among the spacers specially the one with successful longevity surgery. It is important to note that the key point of introducing this surgery was influential in terraforming Mars because its basic aim was to fetch more time for the scientist on the red planet to deeply understand the geophysical condition of the planet so that terraforming process must not get hindered. However, the surgery had its side effect as a war among the humans on Earth who demanded the same from the transnational and the government, a kind of equality in terms of life expectancy; achieving longevity through gerontological surgery is not the option to defeat death but it can prolong death. It won't be wrong to say that sci-fi novels like Mars Trilogy or *The War of the Worlds* by H. G. Wells are like prophecies of the future society and humanity; the depiction of advanced machines in these novels becomes the source of inspiration for the scientists in reality who later come up with such similar ideas like Goddard inventing first fuelled rocket.

'Mars was a world resource', therefore, controlling the entire resource by tiny fraction of humans on Mars was not allowed by the transnational especially when 'the humanity was so deeply stressed' on earth (*Red Mars* 547). The consciousness of the universe was the humans and not some authority as noted in *Red Mars* by Robinson:

There is this about the human mind; if it can be done, it will be done. We can transform Mars and build it like you can build a cathedral, as a monument to humanity and the universe both. (Robinson 186)

Indeed, authority were not the skilled or trained personal suited for terraforming, therefore, they colonised the group of scientist to get their work done. Also, the intelligent beings then have been divided into two fractions; the first one is obviously the scientist and the general humans for whom the terraforming project was carried out but the second one is the group of people working for transnational authority who are not as experts as scientist but they are expert in empire building and politically governing socio-technological world. In this sense the group of people in the authority had their own intelligence of getting their work done by brute force and the group of scientist had their own intelligence of forming and breaking the grounds of control possessed by transnational that is a hallucination of democracy on earth. Building Mars was like building a monument for humanity that is going to make a future history upon which the coming generations would rely and study.

Terraforming was not only a scientific process for the scientist but a path to escape the wrath of nature on earth and to protect the humanity. The scientist who went through experimental longevity surgery had risked their lives for the entire human civilization, although the act is again very anthropocentric, because they had a responsibility to bear; a responsibility like superheroes to protect the earth and the humanity along with other living beings like plants and animals, but only subject to human experiment, that will further support the life cycle and help in initiating a new colony in space. Throughout the novel *Blue Mars* Robinson presented consciousness of the intelligent species that has recently shifted to protect Mars from being another earth due to population explosion that is a major issue if immigrants from earth would continue to settle on Mars while its own population continues to grow with new children born on Mars every year (because it has its own population now) and the old generations still alive due to longevity treatment. Such a comparative population theory and a sense of protecting Mars from overpopulation reflect the consciousness of intelligent species in the universe that is also helping Terran by allowing 'almost ten per cent of its population in immigrants every year' (*Blue Mars* 357).

Mars, in this sense renders wilderness and the beauty of nature that is roguish and an object of aesthetic beauty for some people like 'Ann' who liked the barren red land that will deplete with terraforming (*Red Mars* 146). Martian landscape resembles such aesthetic beauty that requires human consciousness to foster its meaning. Robert Markley in his book *Kim Stanley Robinson* described the beauty of landscape as:

If *Red Mars* is "a beautiful pure landscape," then that purity, like its scientific value, can be appreciated only by human consciousness, and, in responding to Ann, Sax argues that we can imagine beauty and foster scientific knowledge without giving in to a selfish anthropocentrism. (98)

Human consciousness in this sense is the consciousness of the intelligent species in the universe as Robinson described that "we are the consciousness of the universe and the most intelligent species" (we refers to humans) therefore, the intelligent species resembles humans. Moreover, the accountability of responsibility inherited by the scientist from their generation to the new generation born on Mars to help our home planet in danger is the call for such consciousness that the author time and again presented in his Mars Trilogy.



## V. CONCLUSION

The concept of intelligent lives seems controversial especially when Mars Trilogy is compared with the sci-fi web series *Halo* that represents a fight for the establishment of intelligent species in the universe. However, during study it was found that neither the sci-fi films nor Mars Trilogy presented a normal human being as the intelligent life of the universe, the intelligence was often carried out by humans who are genetically altered or modified, this does not entitle that all the humans are not intelligent or represent the intelligence of human race, and most often such modifications are initiated by the spacers like the first hundred group in Mars Trilogy or John in *Halo*. On the other hand, the “consciousness of this universe” (entire human race) and its safety relies with the skilled and technologically trained humans like, astronauts in *Interstellar* or *The Martian*, the scientist from Mars Trilogy, Goku and Vegeta from the manga series, John, a Spartan and killing machine, in *Halo* etc. in this sense we can claim that the intellectual beings are the one trained with technology and advanced biologically in terms of androgyn (having the reproductive qualities of both male and female) as presented in the novel *2312* by Robinson.

Thus, through the expedition of intellectual beings in the universe it has been observed that the one who are trained and skilful in handling the technology or who modified themselves biologically to meet the technological shift in the society of these futuristic stories are really the intellectual beings in the universe, if other highly intellectual and powerful species like the Covenants from *Halo* are absent, whose mutual consciousness is derived from their source of being a creature with emotions and feelings, culture and religion and above all a living being that can transform and overcome any adversity. Spreading such intellectual copies in different parts of the solar system as a means of establishing a space colony is the most politically, culturally and economically feasible properties inherited by humans in space age specially when Covenants are lined up to fight for the consciousness of the universe. Hence, it can be proclaimed that those trained, skilled and manipulated to meet the technological needs and adapt in such advance society can be claimed to be the intellectual beings of the universe capable of forming the space civilization with such intelligent race.

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